## Musi 501 Syllabus – Fall, 2017

**Please note:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

MUSI 501 - **Enhanced Performance: Speaking, Writing, Playing** - is a 2-credit MM course that will meet M-W, 11:00-11:50 in APBH, Room 1133. The professor is Dr. Michael Webster, former principal clarinetist of the Rochester Philharmonic, acting principal clarinetist of the San Francisco Symphony, and professor of clarinet at the Shepherd School. My office is Room 2200, located on the north end of APBH, second floor, beyond the practice rooms and Mr. Lin's studio. Office hours will be by appointment either before or after class. The best way to reach me is by email: mwebster@rice.edu. You may leave a message on the office phone, 713-348-3602, but I'm not usually there except just before or after class. Please do not call me at home. I check email frequently.

The general scope of this syllabus will not change, but there may be minor adjustments during the semester. If so, you will be given adequate notice.

MUSI 501 will help improve speaking and writing skills as they relate to musical performance. The written portion of the class will focus primarily upon writing good program notes and professional biographies. We will stress how to research a subject efficiently, avoid plagiarism, and write with good English grammar and style. The only required textbook is Strunk and White: *The Elements of Style*, 3rd edition, available in paperback at Amazon.com for less than $5.00 including shipping and handling! (Don't get a more recent or more expensive edition. They are more costly and differ from the 3rd edition only in minor details.) I will supply any other written materials.

Written assignments will include editing passages written in poor English, writing notes for repertoire you choose, and writing notes for repertoire with which you are unfamiliar. By the end of the term, students will be expected to write a program note that is concise, factually and grammatically correct, and personal.

Each written assignment receives a grade, the average of which will be 50% of the final grade. Work toward the end of the semester will be weighted more heavily than at the beginning of the semester so as to reward improvement.

All written assignments are expected to be your original work in accordance with the Rice Honor Code. Unless I give specific instructions to the contrary, you may not consult with each other on written assignments. There will be 4-6 graded written assignments, weighted depending on length and complexity. The exact number of assignments will depend on how the class "flows." There will be no final exam.

The other 50% of the final grade will be for spoken presentations in class and at public venues.

Spoken presentations will be assigned to every class member, presented to the class, videotaped, and reviewed. Typically, oral presentations will be followed by a performance of the work that has been introduced, possibly abbreviated if the work is too long. We will practice researching the musical work, gathering and memorizing information, and finding a personal way to introduce it to an audience. Depending on the instrumental makeup of the class, chamber music groups may be formed. Class members will review their videos and find areas that may need improvement, such as posture, vocal projection, content, and connection with the audience

Two pairs of Duncan Hall recitals are scheduled at noon: October 18, 23 and November 13, 15. Each class member will present at least once during each pair of recitals, introducing and playing a short piece. By the end of the term, students will be expected to give a short, well-researched introduction to a piece of music relating directly to an audience without use of notes. These presentations will serve as your exams, and will be graded. Once again, work toward the end of the semester will be weighted more heavily than at the beginning of the semester so as to reward improvement. There will be no final exam.

There will be at least one visit per student to an educational venue outside of school, such as a nearby elementary school, most likely during the last week of classes, date TBA.

Attendance and class participation are especially important for this course, and will affect your grade. Regular attendance is expected. If you have a valid excuse for not attending, you must notify me IN ADVANCE, even if it means sending me an email the morning that you wake up sick. Aside from an unexpected family emergency, I can think of only one other valid excuse, that being if you have been excused from the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra to attend an audition. Any other absence will elicit a warning; a second or further absence will affect your grade.

Several guests will give presentations about various aspects of writing and speaking, such as preparation, vocal projection, collaboration, humor, when to talk and when not to talk. A guest list will be confirmed during the first weeks of class. Susan Lorette Dunn and Debra Dickinson are already scheduled. Recent guests have included:

Shepherd School Faculty

Anthony Brandt, composition
Rachel Buchman, educational programs
Leone Buyse, flute
Brian Connelly, piano
Debra Dickinson, opera studies
Susan Lorette Dunn, voice
Norman Fischer, cello
Tom Jaber, choral conducting
Benjamin Kamins, bassoon
Jon Kimura Parker, piano
Larry Rachleff, orchestral conducting

Outside Guests

Jeffrey Siegel, keyboard conversations
Project Trio
Beyond the Chamber
Wind Sync

I will seek events at the Shepherd School for F2017 during which performers will speak to the audience. If so, our class will attend.

On October 25 from 11:15-12:15 AM, we will attend Around the World With Musiqa (an excellent, scripted children's concert) replacing that morning's class. Comps will be provided and car pools organized to Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center downtown.

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